



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

PHILIPPINES

HEALTH

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: IMPROVED FAMILY HEALTH SUSTAINABLY ACHIEVED

BACKGROUND

The program focuses on improving health outcomes of the family, prioritizing the poor and the marginalized.



The overall nutritional status of women and children has been declining in recent years. Much remains to be done to reduce micronutrient deficiencies, the cause of higher morbidity. The country also faces many challenges in containing infectious diseases, particularly TB. The good news is that the HIV prevalence rate continues to remain very low. Thus, USAID-supported programs focus on TB prevention, maternal and child health, food fortification, surveillance and prevention of HIV/AIDS, as well as emerging diseases like avian influenza. These are important components of the Philippine government's health sector reform agenda.

At the same time, the documented gap between actual (3.5 children per woman) versus wanted fertility (2.5) in 2003 signals a significant unmet need for reproductive health services and commodities. USAID support in this regard has been anchored and continues to be anchored on two basic purposes: first, to improve the health of mothers and children; and second, to ensure that Filipino women and couples who have expressed a desire to space their births and determine their family size have access to voluntary reproductive health services at the LGU level and free to make informed decisions about their reproductive lives.

USAID's family health strategy targets the greatest barriers to sustainable progress: the capacity of LGUs to implement public health programs, the underutilization of the private sector, the lack of accurate and complete information on and access to a range of essential health services especially among the poor, and the need for policies and financing which determine resource allocation in the sector.

LGU provision and management of health services strengthened

Local Government Units (LGUs) must be strengthened by improving (1) key management systems to sustain service delivery, (2) financing for key priority health programs, and (3) performance of service providers. Currently, there are few informed and active community interest groups that motivate and assist local officials in finding solutions to the systemic problems that have developed. This is especially the case when looking at the need to provide health services to the poor and indigent population. To ensure that LGUs maintain a greater focus on the need to strengthen health care management in their localities, advocacy groups must be formed and trained in policy dialogue. The results will lead to LGU capability and accountability, both of which are prerequisites for long-term sustainability of priority health services.

Provision of quality services by private and commercial providers expanded

USAID will increase the use of a significant, robust and innovative private sector for delivery of basic health services such as maternal and child health care, reproductive health, TB treatment, HIV/AIDS prevention, micronutrient supplementation and food fortification. The capacity of the private sector to respond to such emerging diseases as avian influenza will also be enhanced. USAID will continue to support the Philippine government in developing the private commercial sector as an alternative source of health services. As a result, the government would be able to focus its limited public resources on better serving the poor, especially the indigent population, while being confident that quality services are available and accessible to all.

Appropriate healthy behaviors and practices increased

Many of the health challenges facing the country have communication dimensions. While communication alone cannot meet these challenges, it does play an essential and integral part in an effective response to these challenges. Program activities will focus on enabling people to understand appropriate health practices and their benefits, the signs and symptoms of common health disorders that they should take seriously, and where they can go for treatment and services. At the same time, policymakers need to be informed of health sector priorities to effectively lead required policy changes at national and local levels.

Policy environment for financing and provision of services improved

The Philippine government, donors and other stakeholders have recognized that the expanded delivery of health services has been hampered either by unrealistic or outdated legal and regulatory barriers and the absence of appropriate supportive policies or guidelines both at the national and local levels. There is a need to carefully analyze these policy gaps and institute measures that will address them. Among those policies to be addressed are those that will: (1) ensure the availability of commodities in the long-term, (2) improve service provision, and (3) assure sustainable financing for information, services and products that will facilitate the delivery of maternal and child health, reproductive health, TB, HIV-AIDS and services to manage other emerging infections.

visit our website:
<http://www.philippines.usaid.gov>
keyword : "health"